鎌谷悠希
Yuhki Kamatani

I KNOW YOU.

ヒラエスは旅路の果て

The end of the journey.

| 第14話 |

今こそ、語ろう。遠い遠い昔のこと。俺達二人の、そもそもの始まりの話を。

AND I KNOW WHERE YOU CAME FROM.

I KNOW YOUR TRUE NAME.

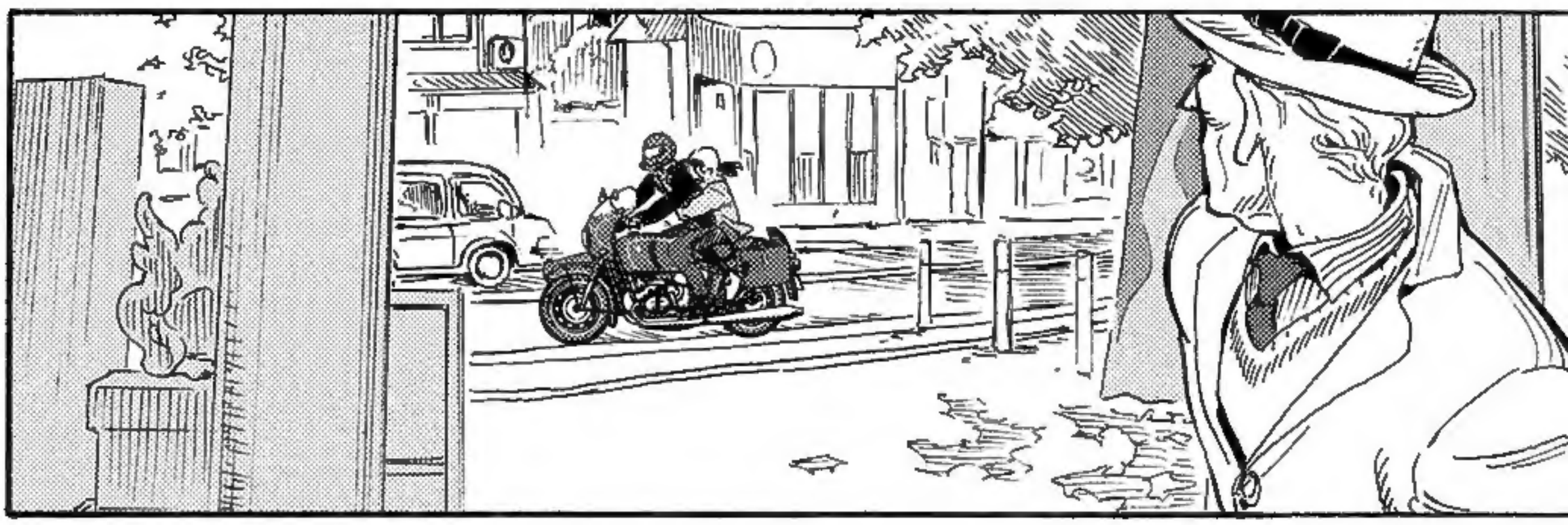
営業時間

I REMEMBER IT WELL.

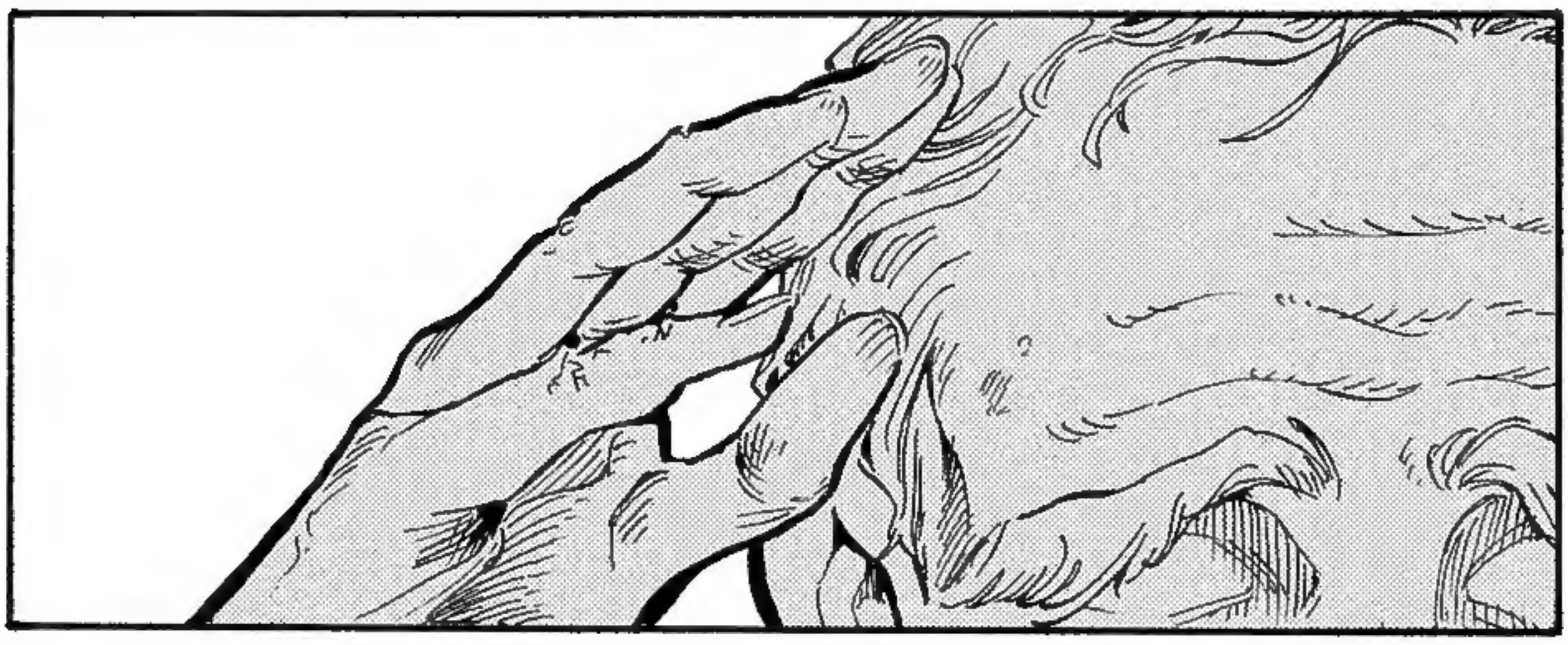
コミックス最新②巻、絶賛発売中！

THERE'S A LOT OF THINGS I'D RATHER FORGET.

ALTHOUGH IT MIGHT BE BETTER IF I DIDN'T.



IT'S THOSE PEOPLE FROM EARLIER.
!



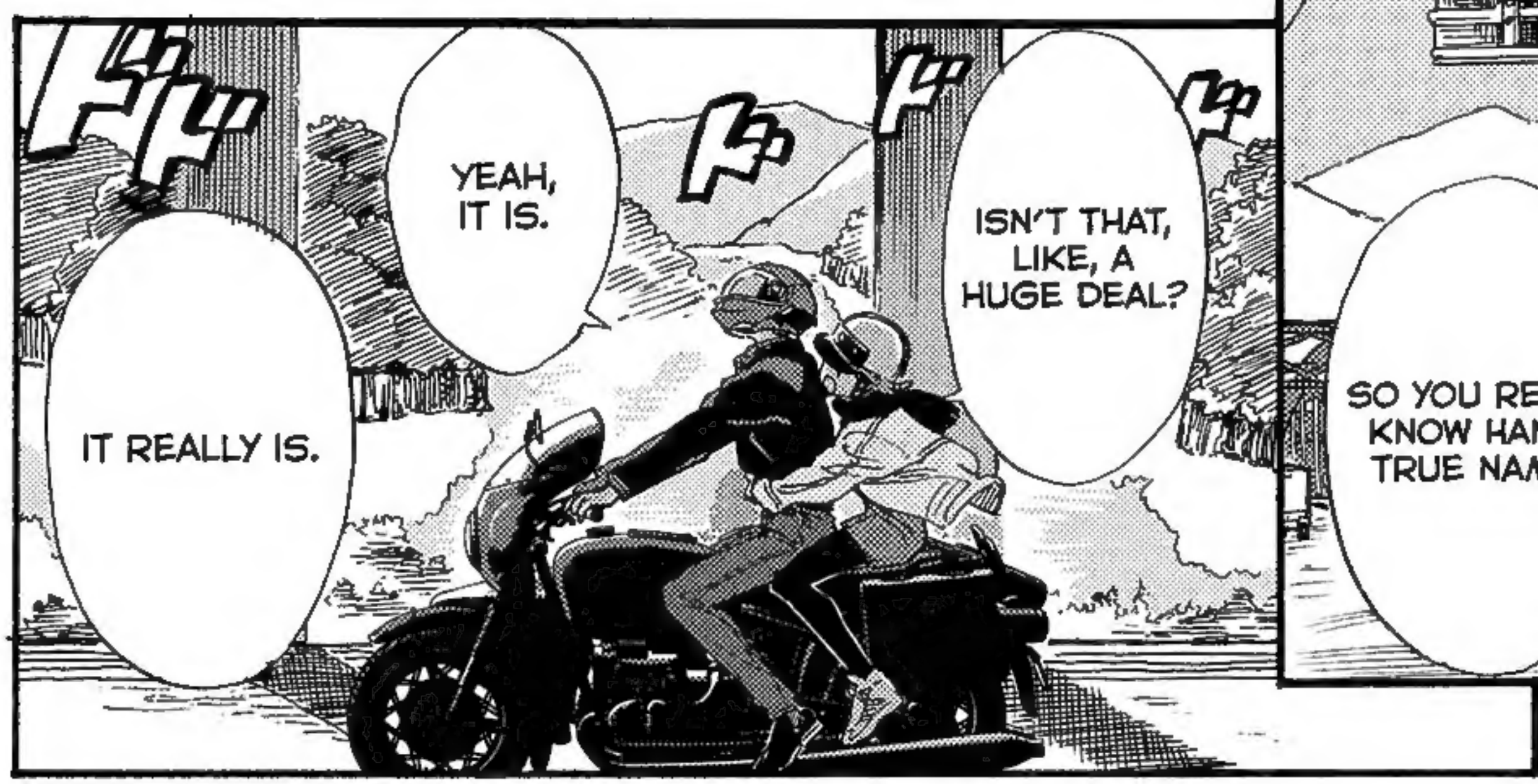
WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

GRANDPA?

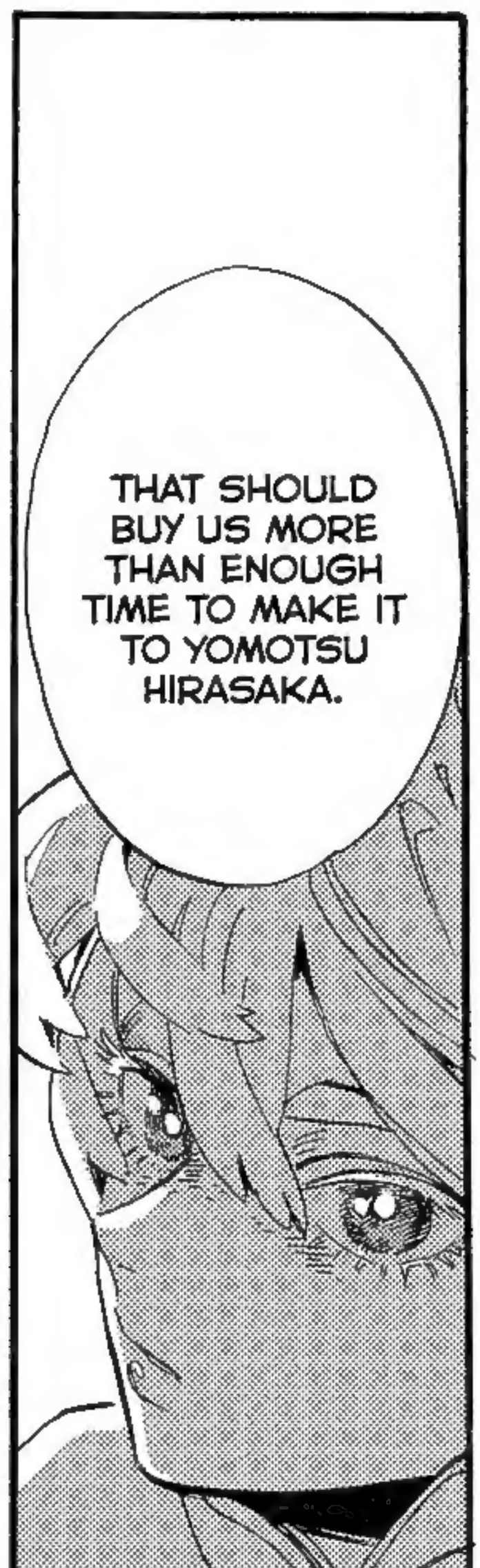
I'M PAYING MY FINAL RESPECTS TO AN OLD WAR BUDDY...

FOR THE LAST TIME.

AAH.
ほ!
FINALLY, MY MISSION IS COMPLETE.
WHAT MISSION?
AT LONG LAST
I CAN FINALLY FORGET.


YEAH, IT IS.
IT REALLY IS.
ISN'T THAT, LIKE, A HUGE DEAL?

SO YOU REALLY KNOW HANI'S TRUE NAME?


THAT SHOULD BUY US MORE THAN ENOUGH TIME TO MAKE IT TO YOMOTSU HIRASAKA.

IF I TELL YOU HANI'S TRUE NAME, MORE LIVING PEOPLE WILL KNOW ABOUT THE *REAL* HANI, WHICH EXTENDS HANI'S LIFE EVEN FURTHER.

YOU KNOW HOW GODS DIE WHEN THERE ARE NO HUMANS LEFT TO REMEMBER THEM?
WELL, HANI'S NO EXCEPTION. WHEN I SAID HANI WASN'T CLOSE TO DEATH, I WASN'T BLUFFING.

INDEED.

YOU JUST WANT YOUR MEMORIES BACK.

BUT THAT'S NOT WHAT YOU WANT, RIGHT, HANI?

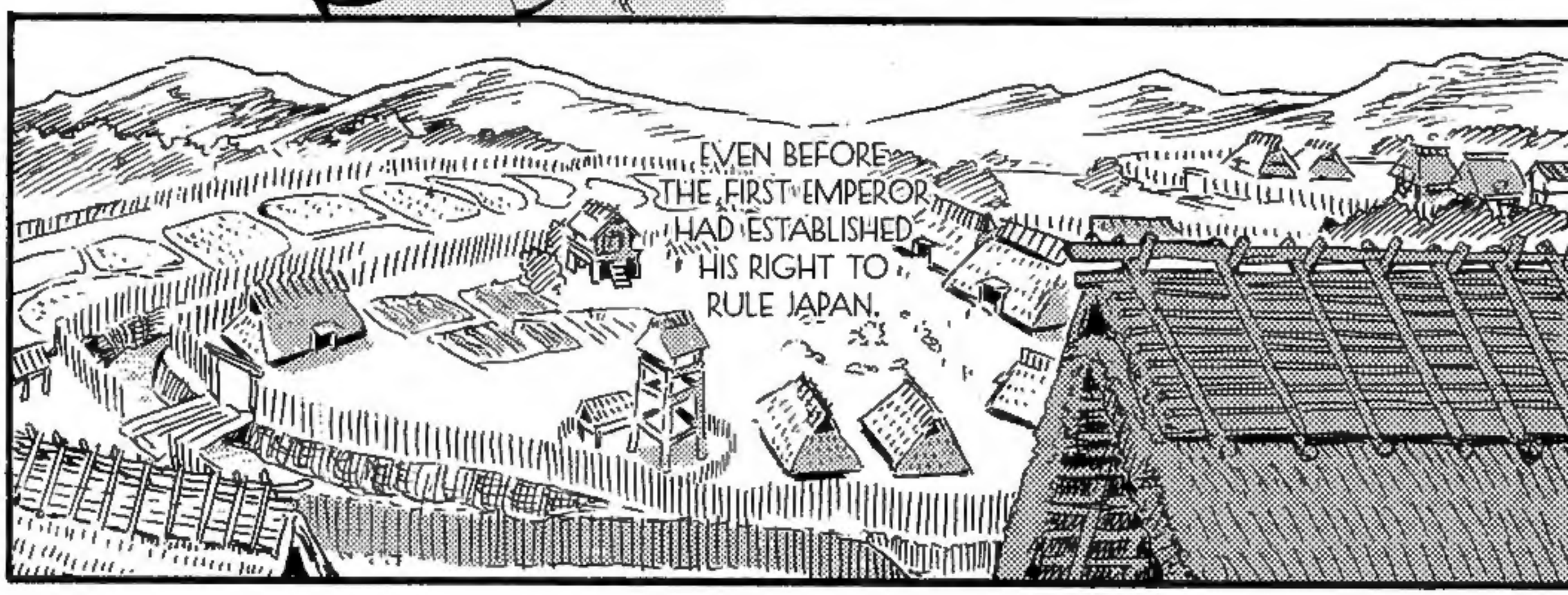
BUT IF I'M BEING HONEST, I'D PREFER IF THE FUTURE BROUGHT SOME-THING ELSE.

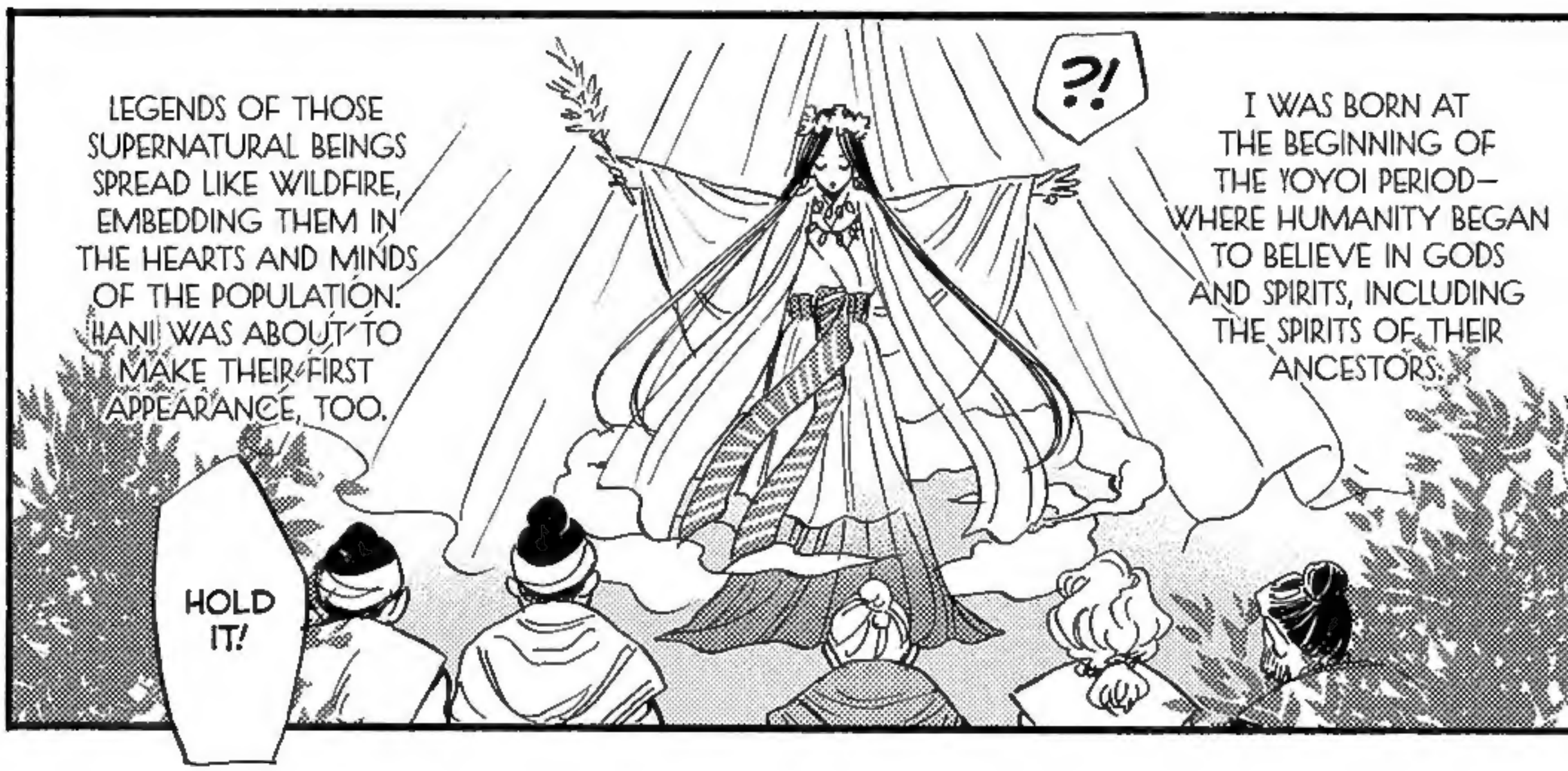
...JUST GOES TO SHOW THAT YOU NEVER KNOW WHAT THE FUTURE WILL BRING.

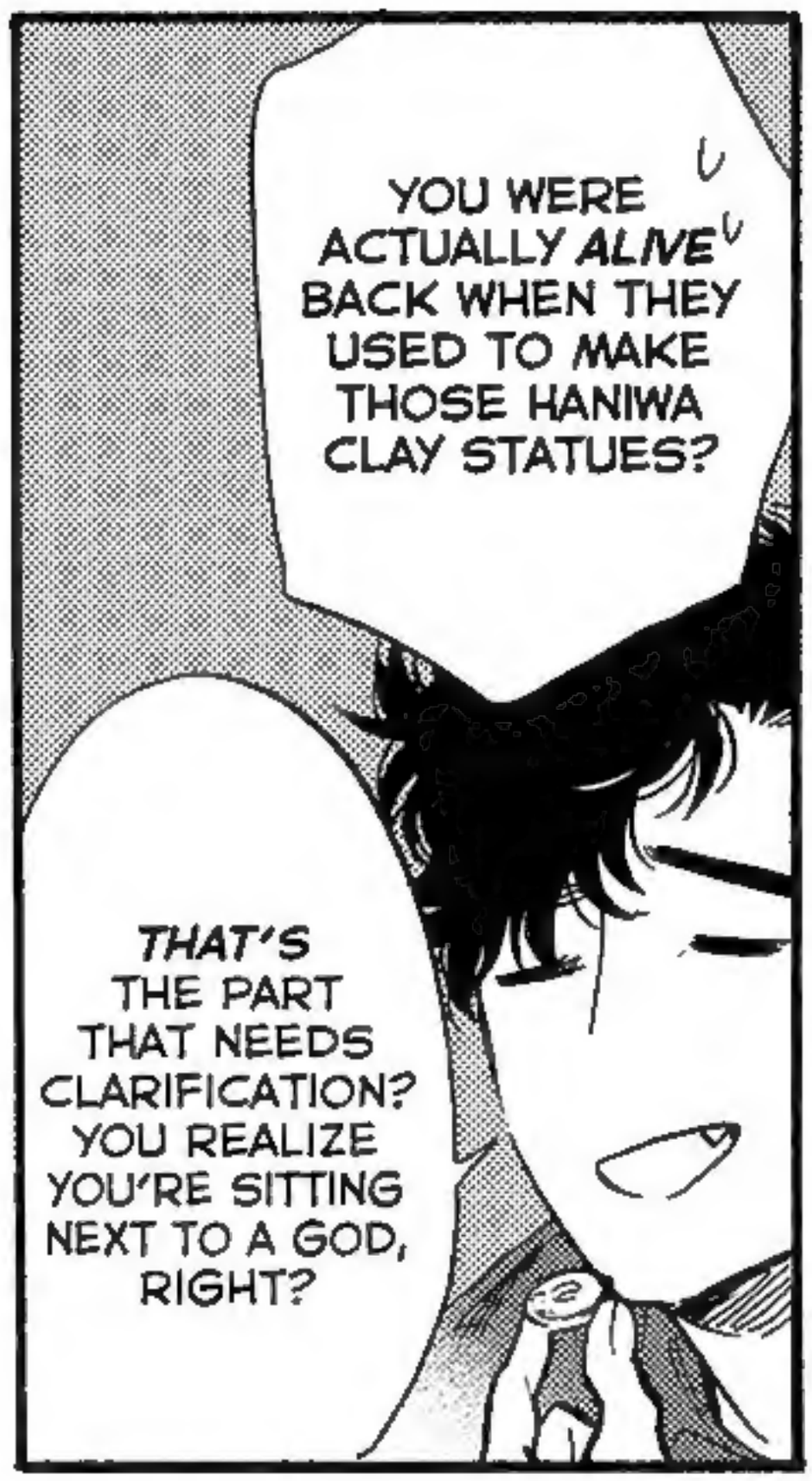
Haha

WHO COULD HAVE GUESSED THAT *I'D* END UP IN CONTROL OF *YOUR* LIFESPAN!

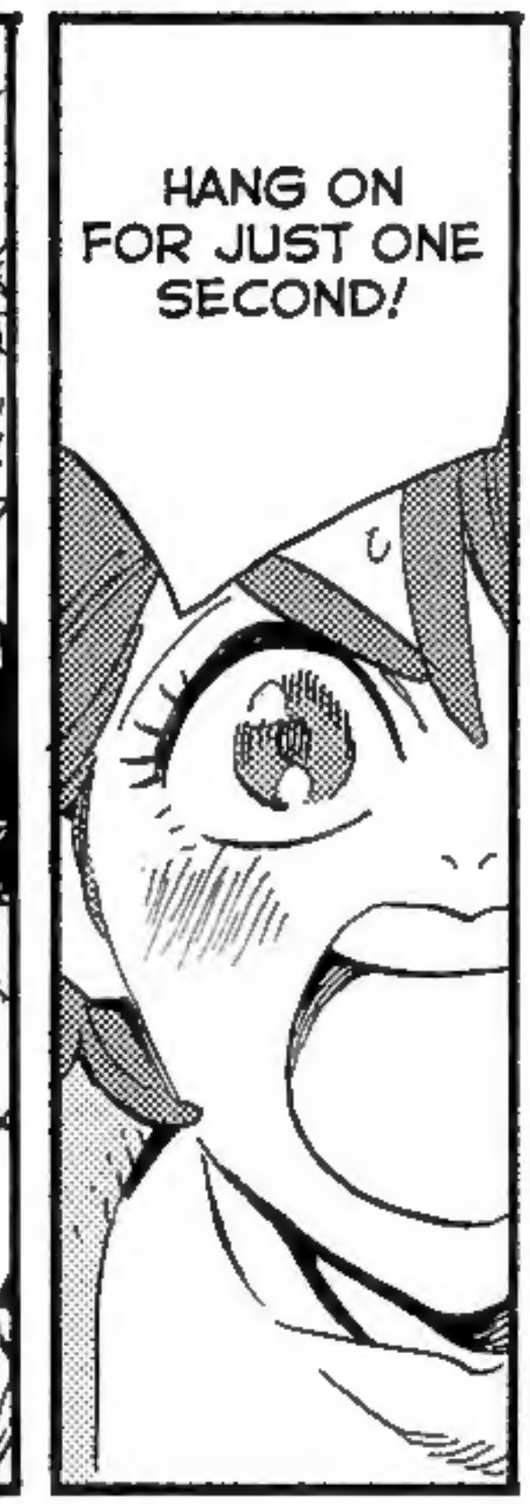
A VERY LONG TIME AGO.
Help yourself.
ONCE UPON A TIME, A VERY LONG TIME AGO...


EVEN BEFORE THE FIRST EMPEROR HAD ESTABLISHED HIS RIGHT TO RULE JAPAN.

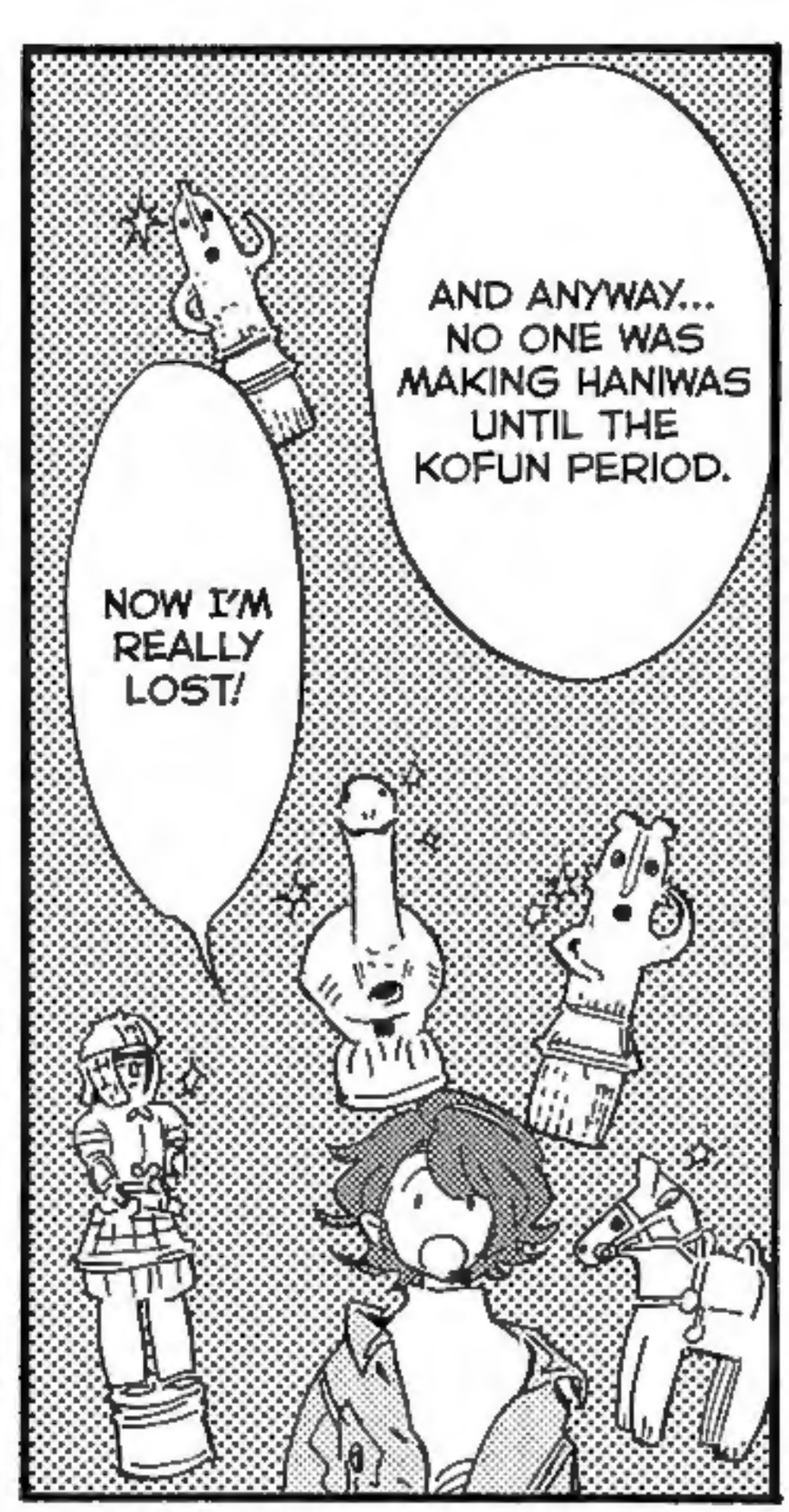

LEGENDS OF THOSE SUPERNATURAL BEINGS SPREAD LIKE WILDFIRE, EMBEDDING THEM IN THE HEARTS AND MINDS OF THE POPULATION. HANI WAS ABOUT TO MAKE THEIR FIRST APPEARANCE, TOO.
?!
I WAS BORN AT THE BEGINNING OF THE YOYOI PERIOD— WHERE HUMANITY BEGAN TO BELIEVE IN GODS AND SPIRITS, INCLUDING THE SPIRITS OF THEIR ANCESTORS.
HOLD IT!


YOU WERE ACTUALLY *ALIVE* BACK WHEN THEY USED TO MAKE THOSE HANIWA CLAY STATUES?
THAT'S THE PART THAT NEEDS CLARIFICATION? YOU REALIZE YOU'RE SITTING NEXT TO A GOD, RIGHT?

C'MON MIKA, I HAVEN'T EVEN GOTTEN TO THE GOOD PART YET.
DID YOU SAY THE *YAYOI* PERIOD?!


HANG ON FOR JUST ONE SECOND!

THAT'S...
WHEN I WAS BORN?


AND ANYWAY... NO ONE WAS MAKING HANIWAS UNTIL THE KOFUN PERIOD.
NOW I'M REALLY LOST!

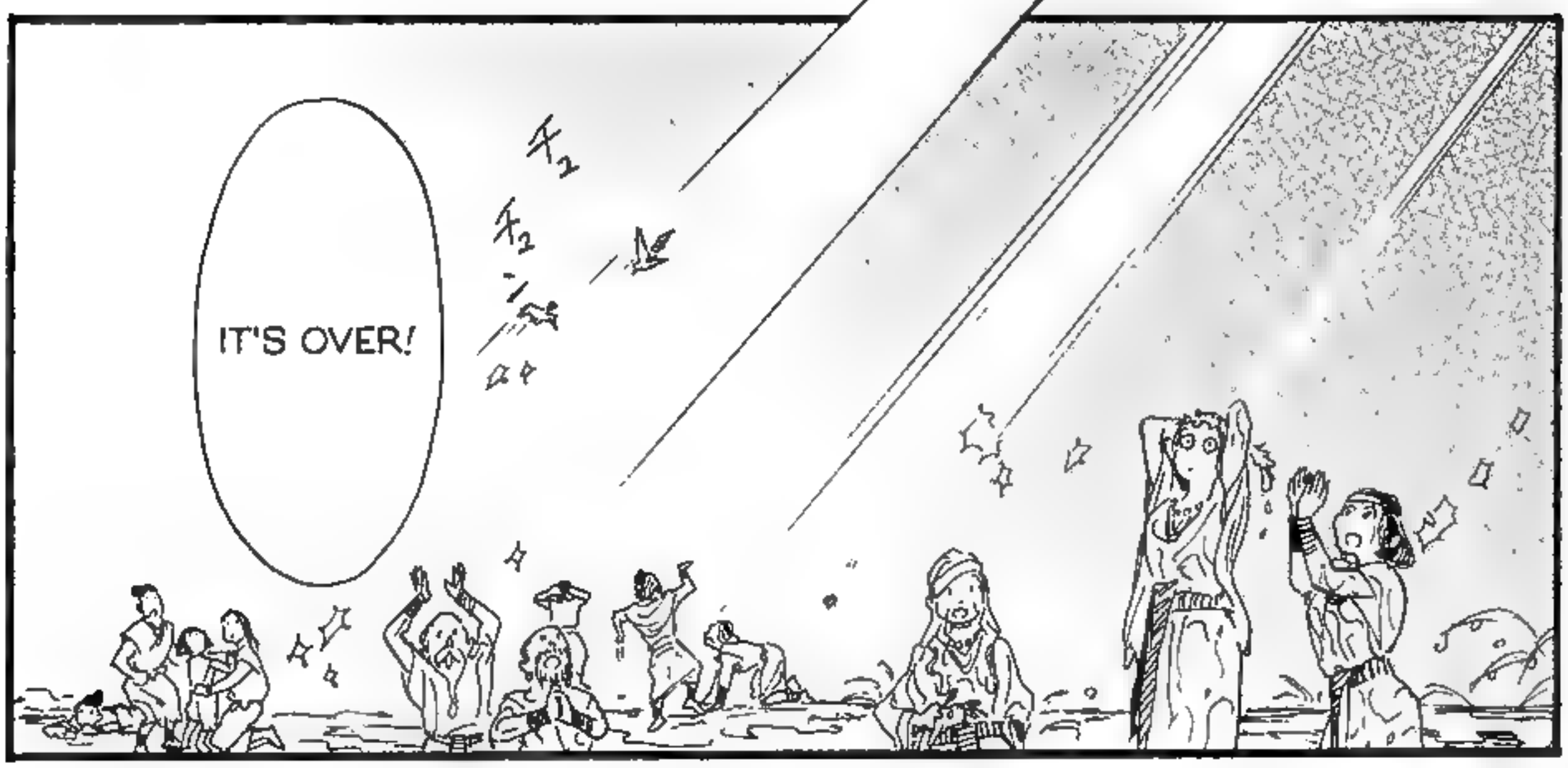
YOU WERE BORN OUT OF THE CALAMITY THAT FOLLOWED.
IT ALL STARTED WITH A DEVASTATING FLOOD.
Both lost to the floods!
My brother!
My fields!
O GODS!
Aah!
WHAT HAVE WE DONE TO DESERVE THIS?
WHY?!
YAMATO!
WE HAVEN'T DONE ANYTHING. THIS IS JUST SENSELESS BRUTALITY.

WE'VE SUFFERED FOR TEN DAYS AND NIGHTS. HOW MUCH MORE ENTERTAINMENT COULD THIS GOD WANT?
My son!
ALL OF THE RICE THAT WAS READY FOR HARVEST IS DESTROYED.

THAT'S EXACTLY WHAT I'VE COME TO EXPECT FROM A GOD.
THEY'RE TOYING WITH US.

RICE IS OUR LIFEBLOOD!
Yamato, Be care-full!
ALL YOU DO IS BRING DESTRUCTION! DON'T YOU HAVE ANY REGARD FOR HUMAN LIFE?!

RICE?
WOULD YOU LIKE TO TRY SOME?
IT'S USEFUL IN ANY STATE WHETHER IT'S COOKED, PRESERVED, OR FERMENTED. YOU, ON THE OTHER HAND, HAVE DONE NOTHING!
IF ANYTHING'S WORTHY OF BEING CALLED A GOD, IT'S RICE, NOT YOU!
YES.
I WOULD.
YOU ARE WELCOME AT OUR TABLE!
THEN END THIS DEVASTATING STORM AND EAT WITH US!


IT'S OVER!

WELL, YAMATO... I'VE ENDED THIS STORM OUT OF MY NEWFOUND RESPECT FOR YOU.
IN FACT, I'LL WATCH OVER THIS LAND AND ENSURE THAT IT PRODUCES A BOUNTIFUL HARVEST FOR YEARS TO COME!

WHAT A FANTASTIC DISPLAY! WHAT IS YOUR NAME, MORTAL?
...YAMATO.

Ha
pfft
ha
ha!

ALL I ASK IS ONE THING IN RETURN.

BECOME MY COMPANION.

UNTIL THE END OF TIME.

MEMORIES WAS SHOCKING BUT NOBODY MORE THAN ME. MANY HOURS, PAINFUL YEARS PASSED BEFORE I COULD QUESTION AND TO ACCEPT WHAT HAD HAPPENED.
SOME MAGIC, ALONG WITH THE WILL OF THE GOD, MADE ME MYSTICAL...
THIS WAS MY NEW REALITY THE CURSE WAS MINE TO BEAR FOR ETERNITY
HEY GOD, HOW ARE YOU TODAY?

WELL...

WHAT'S WRONG?

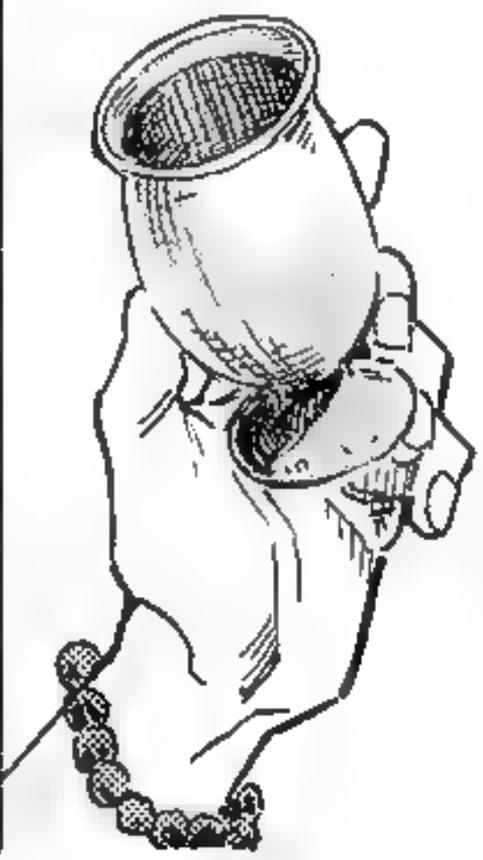
...

IS THAT BAD?

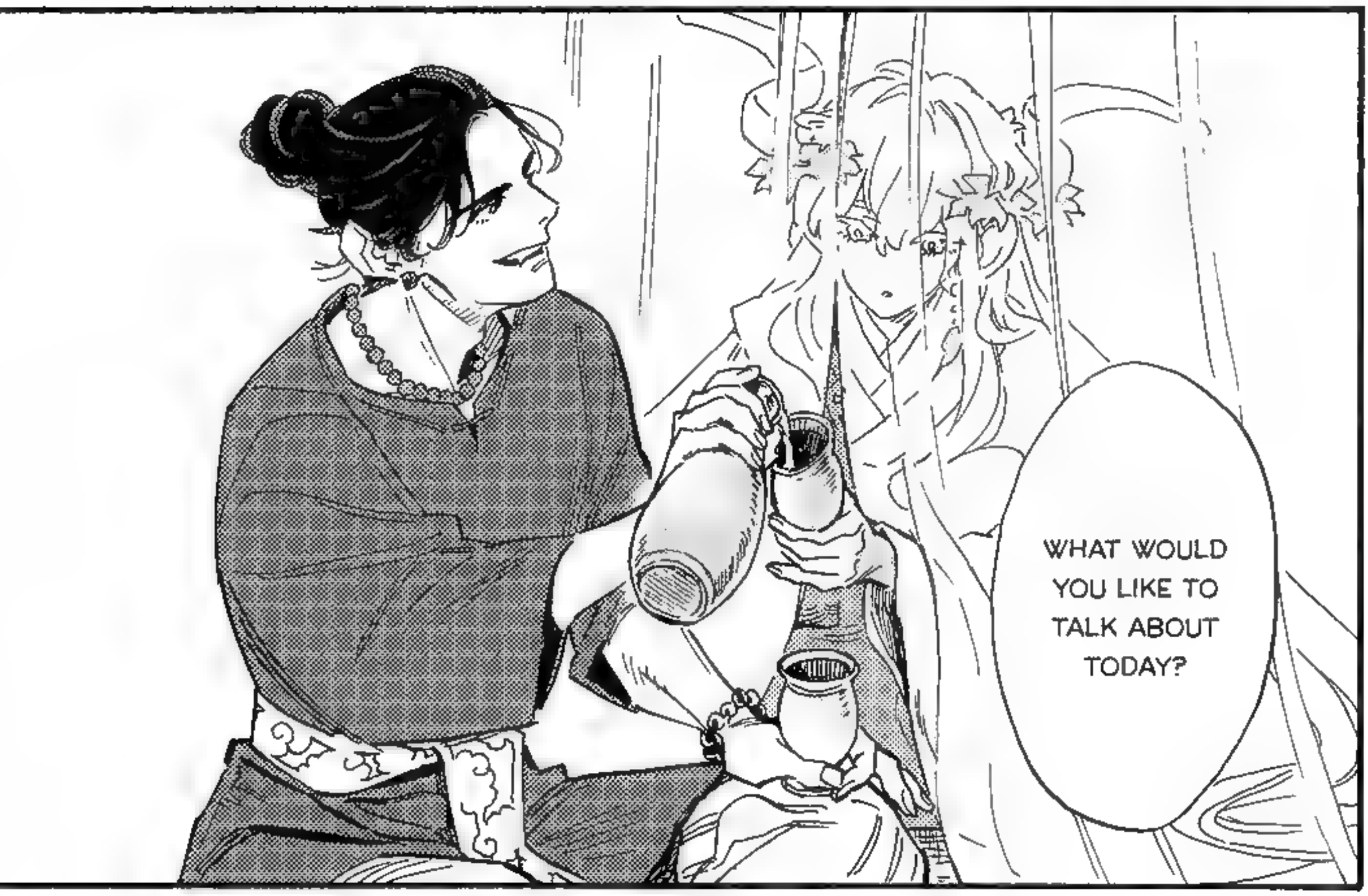
NOT AT ALL.

WE'VE GROWN VERY CLOSE, HAVEN'T WE?

WELL, ANYWAY...
WE HAVE ALL THE TIME IN THE WORLD.



IT'S NICE HAVING SOMEONE TO TALK TO, DON'T YOU THINK?
I BELIEVE YOU MIGHT BE ON TO SOMETHING.


WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO TALK ABOUT TODAY?

WHY DO MORTALS CELEBRATE THE DEAD?
THEY DO IT BECAUSE THEY HOPE THAT THE DEAD WILL COME BACK AND VISIT THEM.
HMM.
THEY HAVE IT BACKWARDS. THE ROAD TO DEATH ONLY TRAVELS IN ONE DIRECTION.
THE WORLDS OF THE LIVING AND THE DEAD *ARE* CONNECTED, BUT NOT IN THE WAY THEY'D EXPECT.

THE DAYS ALWAYS FLEW BY.
I KNEW THAT AS LONG AS THIS GOD WAS BY MY SIDE...
WHETHER WE WERE HAVING SERIOUS DISCUSSIONS OR JUST MESSING AROUND...

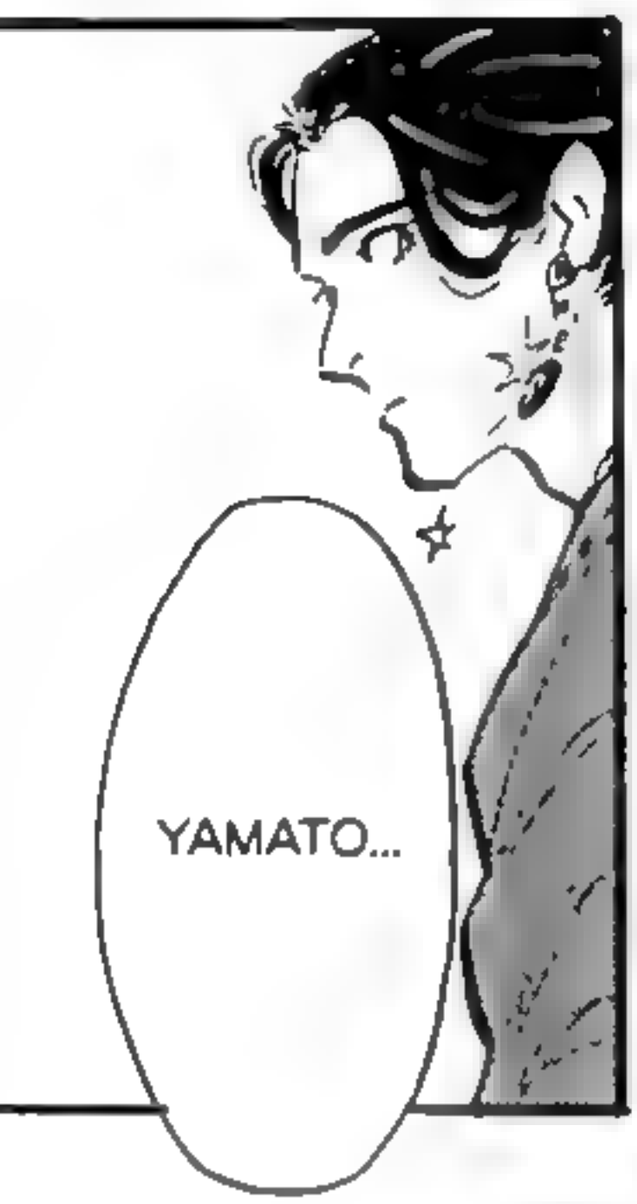
MY PURPOSE WAS CLEAR.

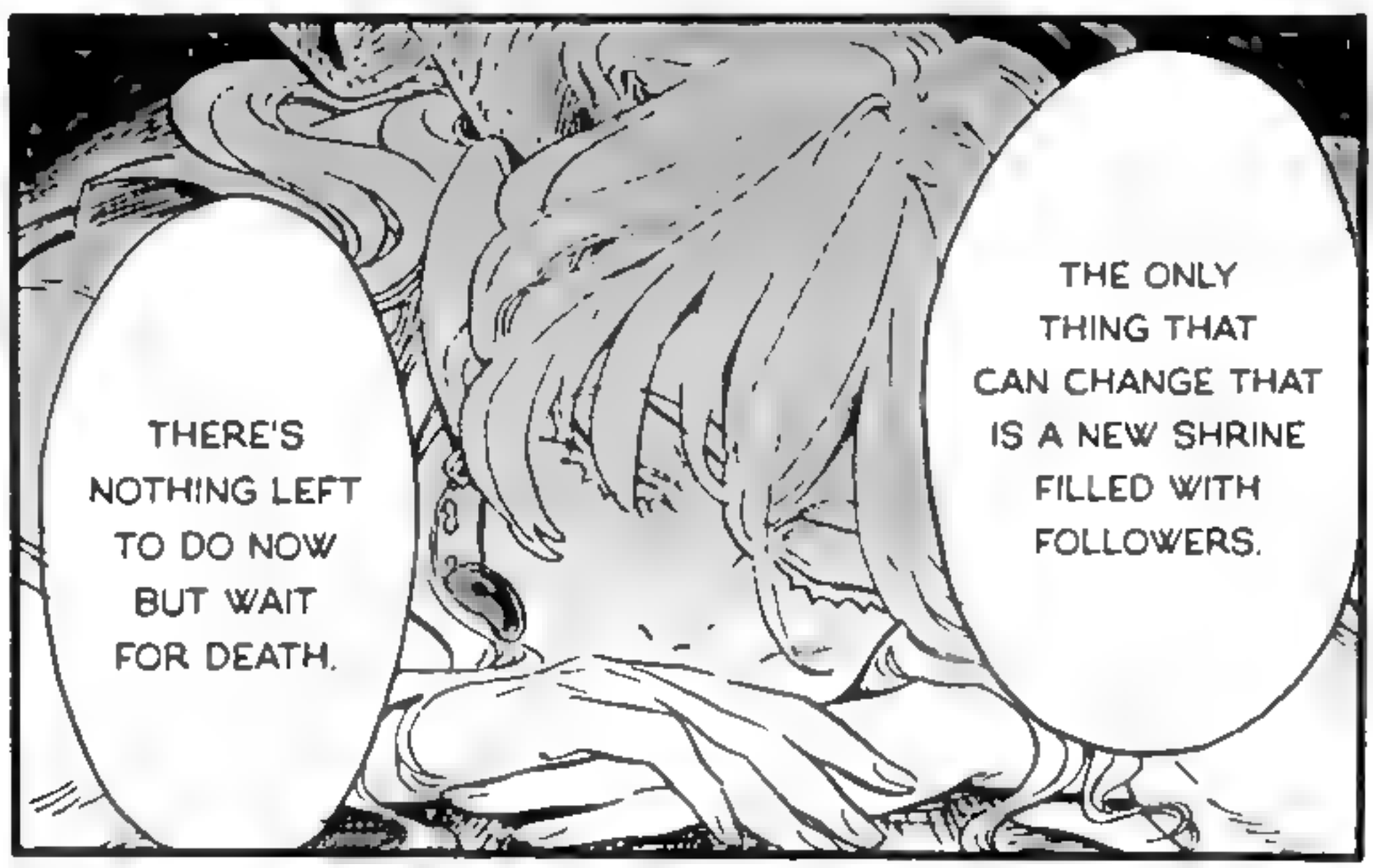
I TRIED TO FOCUS ON OTHER THINGS INSTEAD.
WAS IT COMING SOON?
BUT WHAT IF I OUTLIVED THEM? WOULD THAT DAY EVER COME?

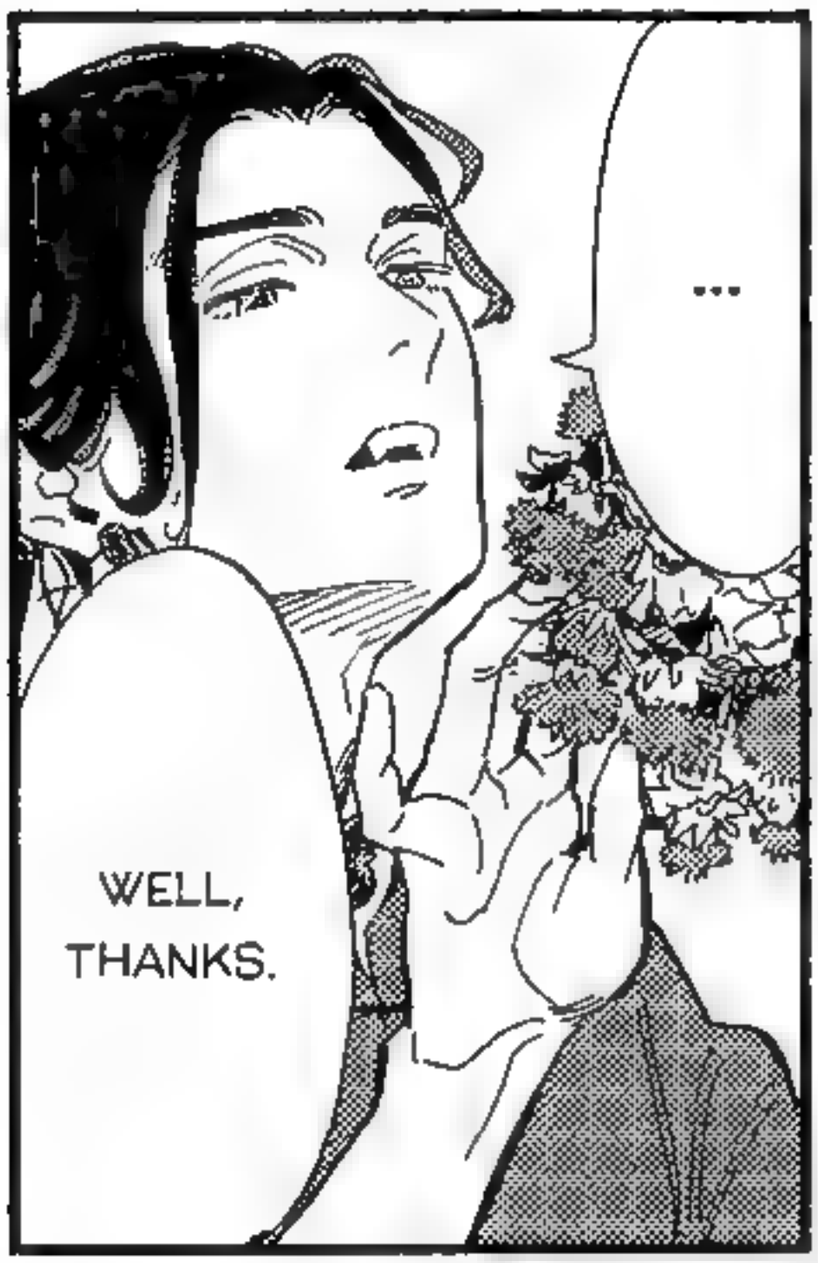
I DEVOTED MY WHOLE BEING TO OUR CONVERSATIONS.
AND, OF COURSE, WE KEPT TALKING.
SO, I MADE SURE THE GOD WAS HAPPY AND WORKED TO MAINTAIN THE PROSPERITY OF MY HOMELAND.

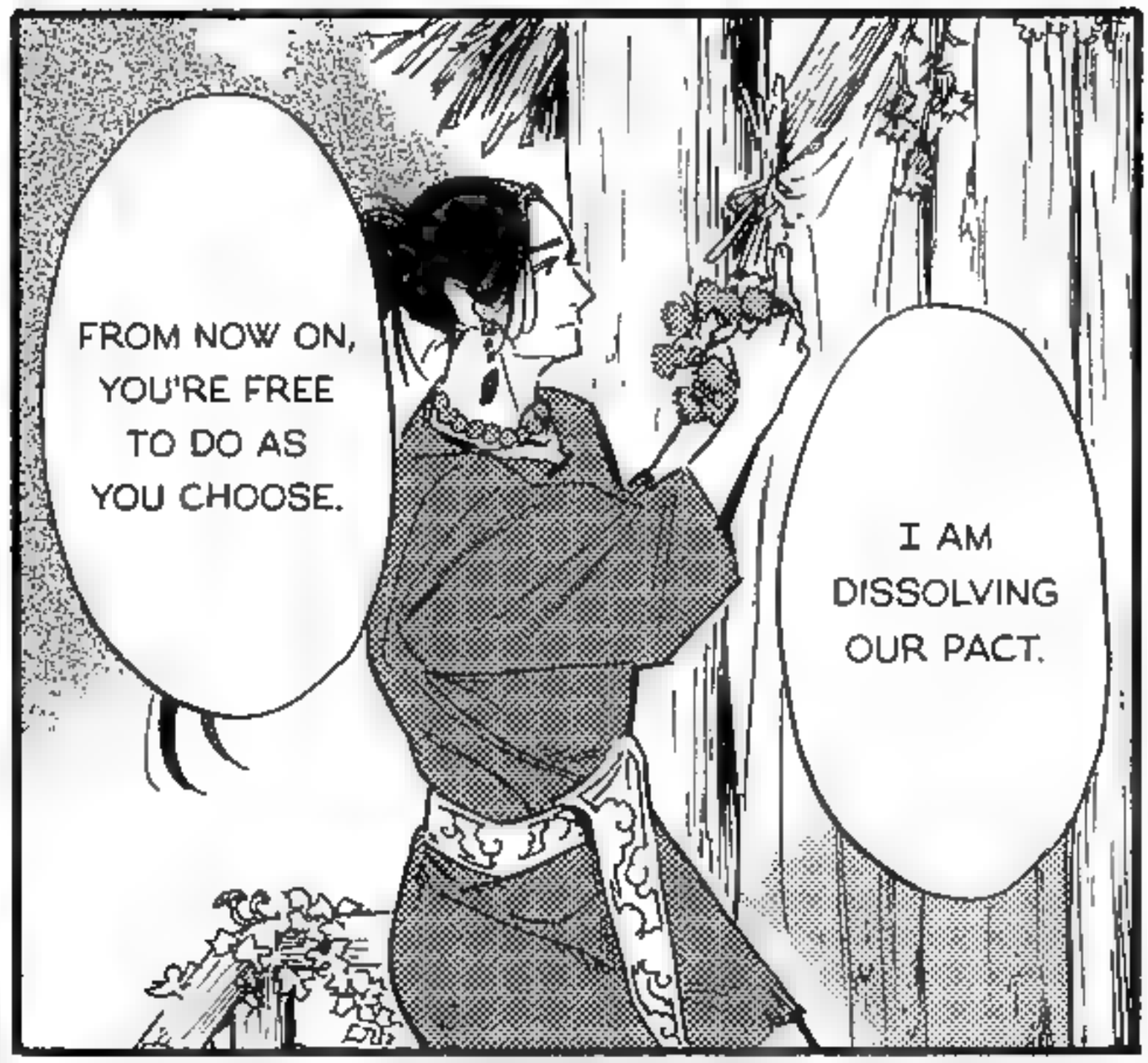
AND TALKED...
WE TALKED...
BUT NOTHING LASTS FOREVER.

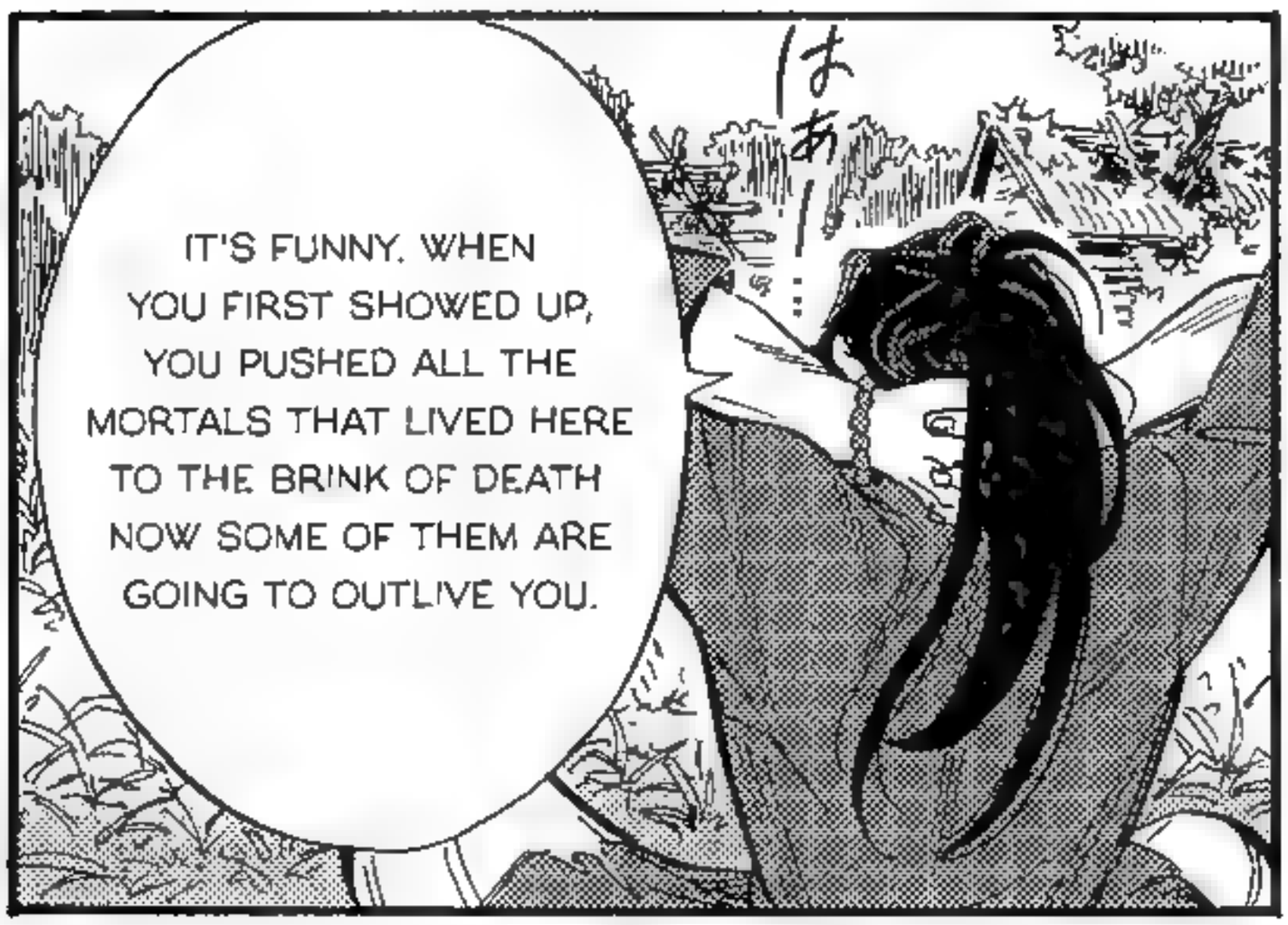
IT SEEMS THAT THIS IS THE END OF MY ROAD.
YAMATO, YOUR HOMELAND HAS FALLEN INTO RUIN AND ALL THOSE WHO ONCE FOLLOWED ME HAVE MOVED ON

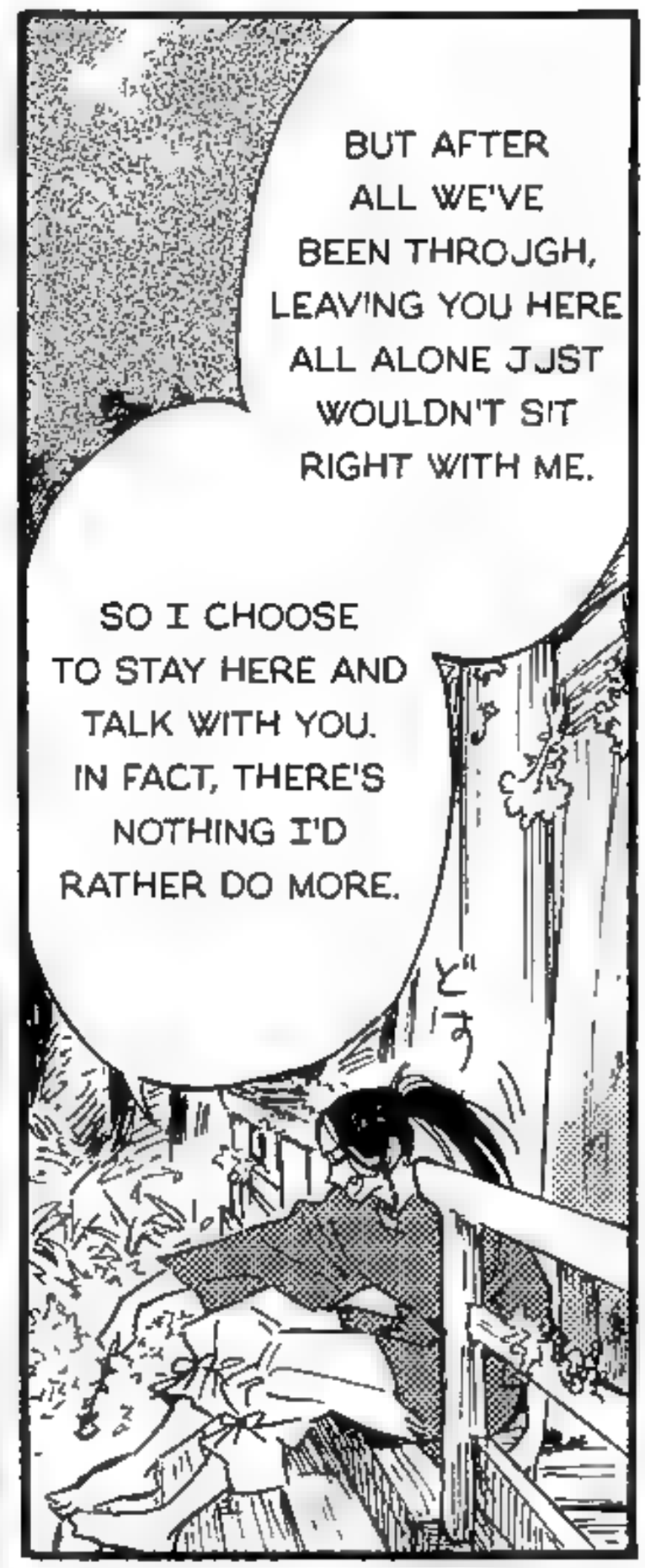

YAMATO...


THERE'S NOTHING LEFT TO DO NOW BUT WAIT FOR DEATH.
THE ONLY THING THAT CAN CHANGE THAT IS A NEW SHRINE FILLED WITH FOLLOWERS.

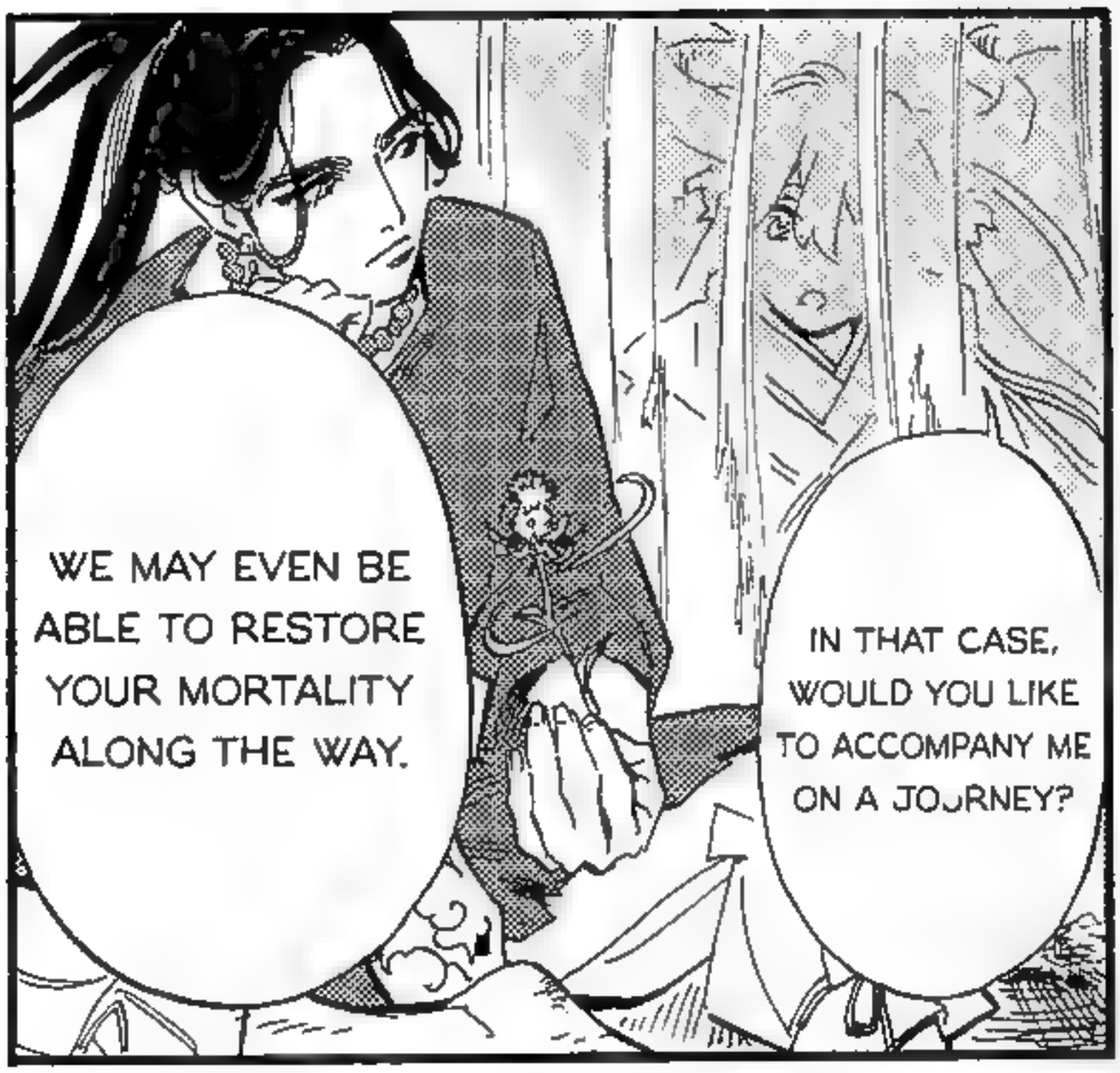

...
WELL, THANKS.

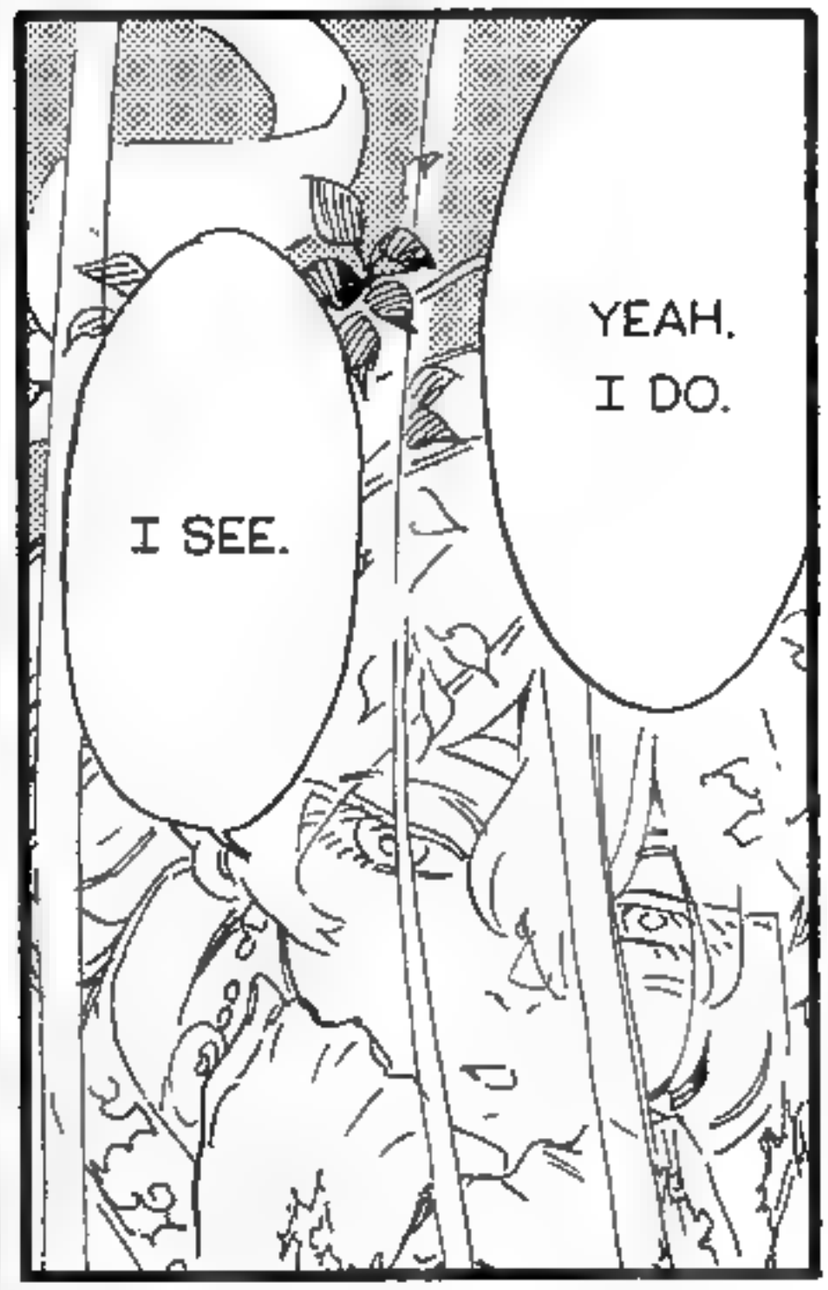

FROM NOW ON, YOU'RE FREE TO DO AS YOU CHOOSE.
I AM DISSOLVING OUR PACT.


IT'S FUNNY. WHEN YOU FIRST SHOWED UP, YOU PUSHED ALL THE MORTALS THAT LIVED HERE TO THE BRINK OF DEATH NOW SOME OF THEM ARE GOING TO OUTLIVE YOU.


BUT AFTER ALL WE'VE BEEN THROJGH, LEAVING YOU HERE ALL ALONE JJST WOULDN'T SIT RIGHT WITH ME.
SO I CHOOSE TO STAY HERE AND TALK WITH YOU. IN FACT, THERE'S NOTHING I'D RATHER DO MORE.

DO YOJ WISH FOR DEATH, YAMATO?

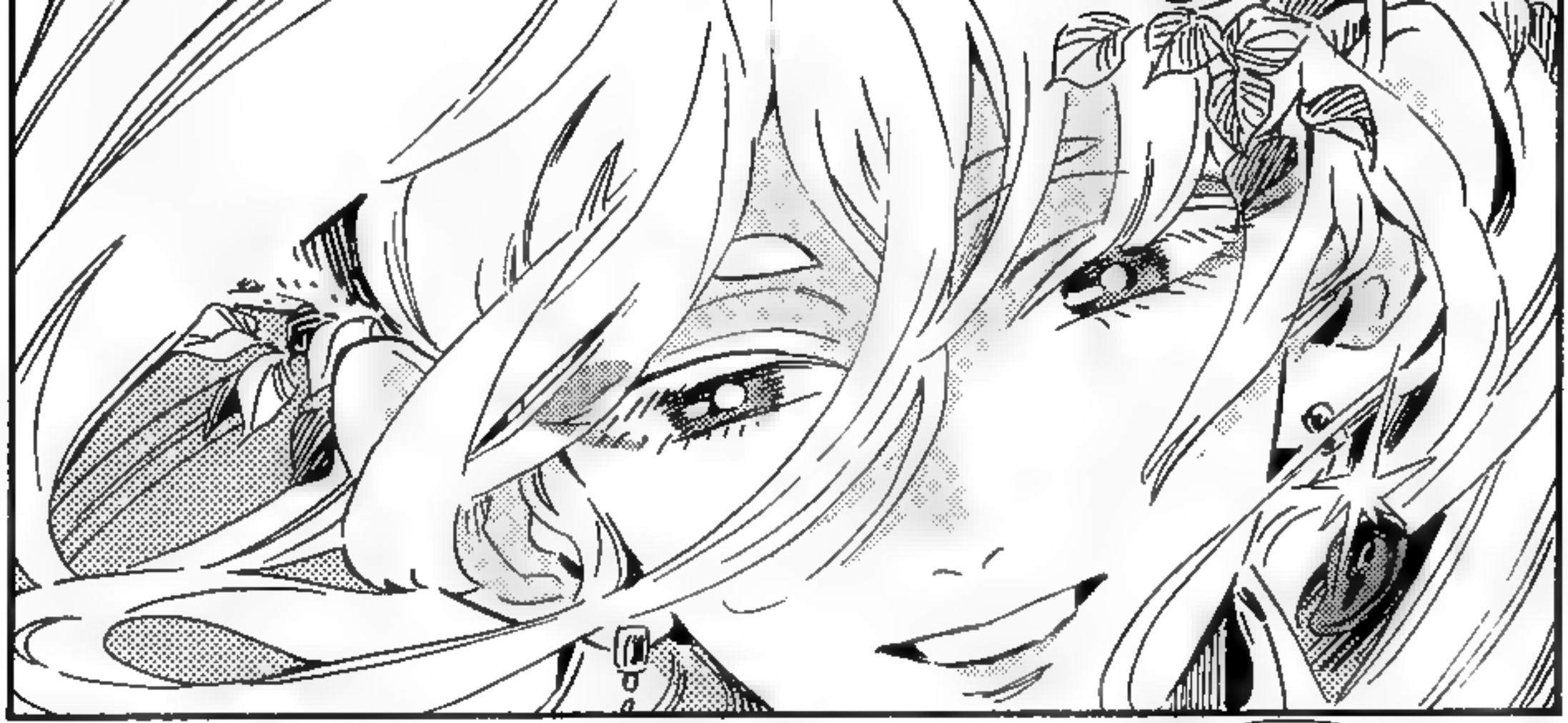

WE MAY EVEN BE ABLE TO RESTORE YOUR MORTALITY ALONG THE WAY.
IN THAT CASE, WOULD YOU LIKE TO ACCOMPANY ME ON A JOURNEY?

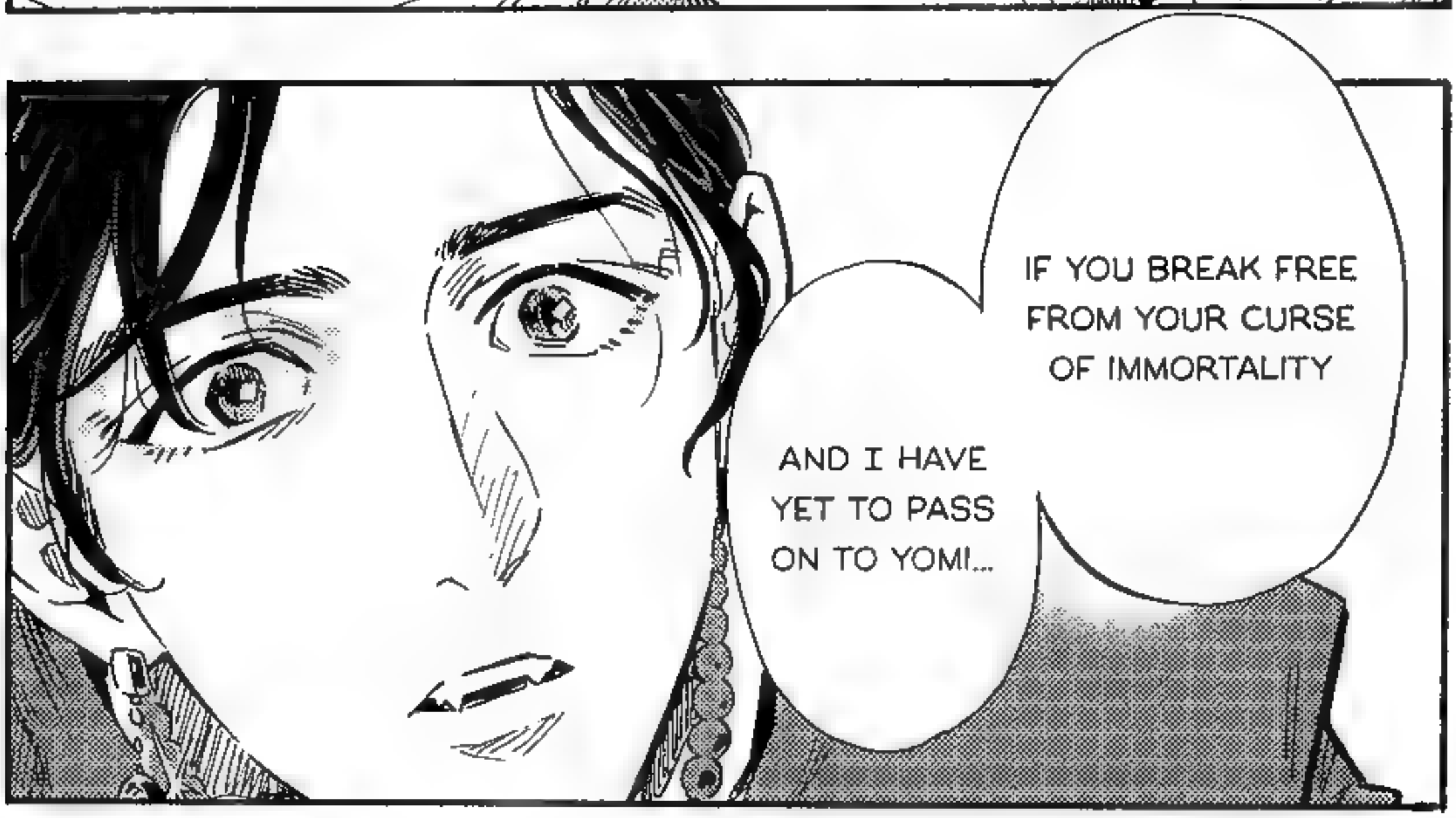

I SEE.
YEAH. I DO.

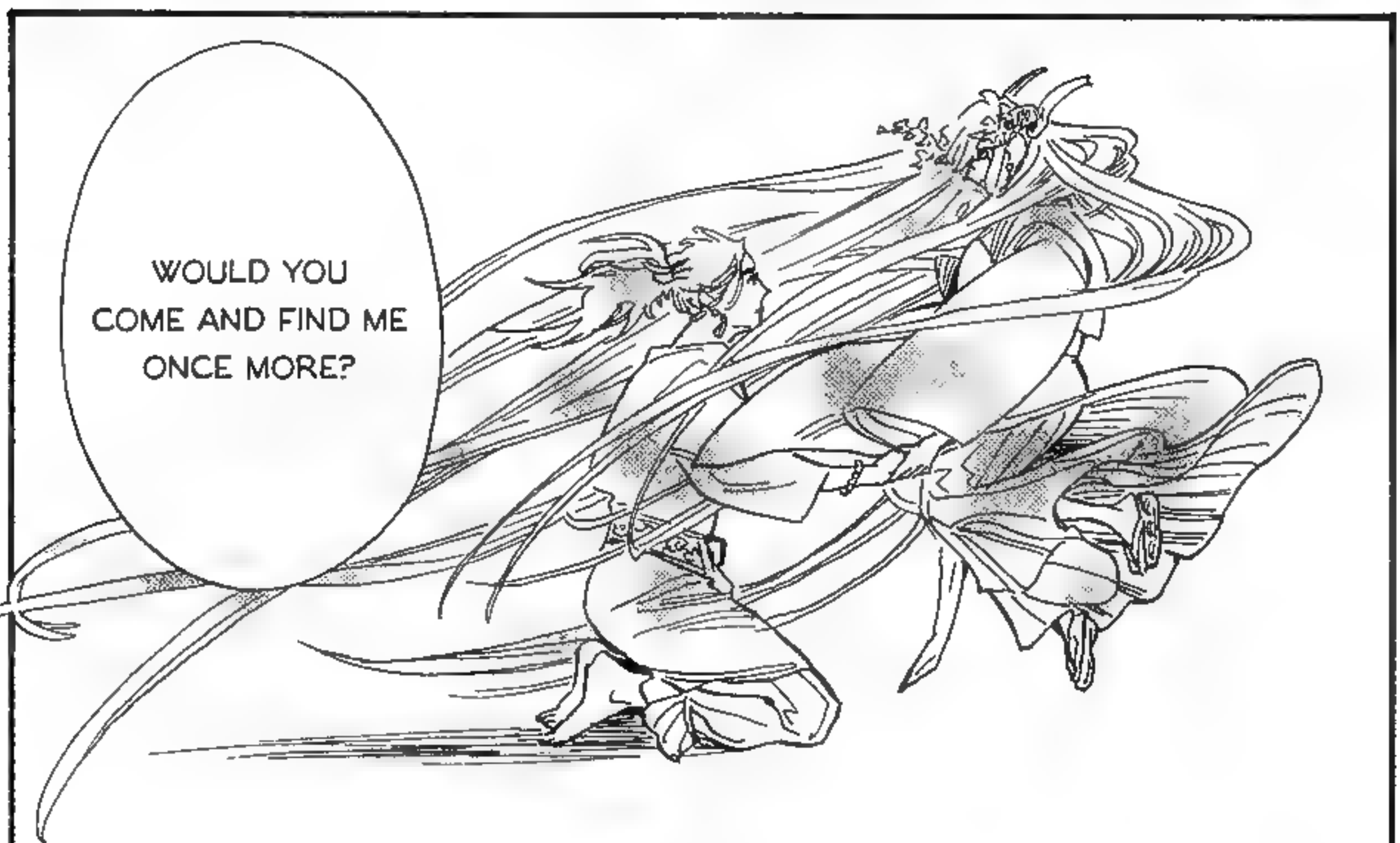
YOU KNOW, IT'S BEEN HUNDREDS OF YEARS AND TRAVEL HASN'T ONCE CROSSED MY MIND.
A JOURNEY?

!

"DEATH."
HUH?
YAMATO...
BUT I WONDER WHAT IT WILL BE LIKE TO EXPERIENCE IT FOR OURSELVES.
WHAT DOES THAT WORD REALLY MEAN? WE'VE CERTAINLY SEEN A LOT OF IT...




IF YOU BREAK FREE FROM YOUR CURSE OF IMMORTALITY
AND I HAVE YET TO PASS ON TO YOMI...


WOULD YOU COME AND FIND ME ONCE MORE?

I WOULD LOVE TO SPEND MY FINAL MOMENTS TALKING WITH YOU AS WE ONCE DID.

NOTHING WOULD MAKE ME HAPPIER!

OOH! IS THAT A PROMISE?

WE'LL FIND EACH OTHER AGAIN.

THEN IT'S SETTLED. WHEN DEATH SEPARATES US...

I'LL DO WHATEVER IT TAKES.

HOW COULD I HAVE FORGOTTEN SOMETHING SO IMPORTANT?

THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR KEEPING OUR HISTORY ALIVE,

YAMATO.

死ねない男と神さまの、
忘れられかけてた長い長い思い出。
それを取り戻せたことが、嬉しい。

【ヒラエスは旅路の果て】第14話／おわり

次号へつづく